



The GYCC panel (above, Regional Forester Jack Troyer, USFS Intermountain Region. Above right, left to right: Superintendent Mary Gibson Scott, Grand Teton National Park; Refuge Manager Barry Reiswig, National Elk Refuge; Forest Supervisor Becky Aus, Shoshone National Forest; former Yellowstone Superintendent Bob Barbee; and moderator Yellowstone Superintendent Suzanne Lewis); below, their audience.



NPS PHOTOS



8th Biennial Scientific Conference Explores 21st–Century Conservation

Alice Wondrak Biel

THE 8TH BIENNIAL SCIENTIFIC Conference on the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, *Greater Yellowstone Public Lands: A Century of Discovery, Hard Lessons, and Bright Prospects*, was held October 17–19, 2005, at the Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel. The conference set a new attendance record, with 209 registered attendees. This year's conference was highly anticipated as being one of the most immediately pragmatic in the 14-year history of the series, and one of the most directly useful to public land managers. Participants focused on the mandates, "cultures," relationships, and accomplishments of the numerous local, state, and federal management

agencies responsible for Greater Yellowstone's public lands.

Interagency cooperation was a primary theme, and the meeting kicked off with a screening of *The Greatest Good*, a two-hour film celebrating the centennial of the U.S. Forest Service (1905–2005). On Monday night, U.S. Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth delivered the opening keynote address to a packed Map Room at the Mammoth Hotel, lit by emergency lights, candles, glowsticks, and flashlights due to a localized power outage. Chief Bosworth outlined what he believes to be the four biggest threats to U.S. national forests: (1) unmanaged recreational use, (2) invasive species, (3) loss of open

space, and (4) the unnatural accumulation of fuels, leading to dangerous fire conditions. The chief's declaration that "The day when people can go where they want cross-country (on off-highway vehicles) is over," received a round of applause from the crowd.

Former forest service chief Jack Ward Thomas, now the Boone and Crockett Professor of Conservation at the University of Montana, presented the A. Starker Leopold Lecture on Tuesday night. Dr. Thomas traced 100 years of conservation in the U.S., from its roots in simply preventing resource exploitation to today's ecosystem and multi-use management mandates. Canadian conservationist

and activist Harvey Locke delivered the Superintendent's International Lecture. In an inspiring speech that received a standing ovation, Mr. Locke stated that if the dream of the twentieth century was unmitigated progress based in a wealth of natural resources, the dream of the twenty-first century should be ensuring that what was done to the land and resources in the twentieth century is undone. He also detailed the Yellowstone-to-Yukon initiative, expressed confidence in the prospects for the project's success, and told the audience of the most important lesson he's learned in conservation work: never give up.

The Aubrey L. Haines lecturer was Sarah Boehme of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center's Whitney Gallery of Western Art. Dr. Boehme's talk, "Yellowstone Paintings: Artistic

Discoveries, Hard Rides, and Golden Vistas," discussed the influence of Yellowstone-inspired art on Washington policymakers as they considered the park's creation and supported the subsequent conservation movement.

In other keynotes, landscape ecologist Dr. Monica Turner presented an amalgam of lessons and surprises from post-1988 fire research in Yellowstone, and



Harvey Locke, of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, received a standing ovation for his inspiring speech.



Karen Wade, former Intermountain Region Director of the National Park Service, spoke on Wednesday morning.

former NPS Intermountain Region director Karen Wade shared her thoughts on the importance of science and individual responsibility in conservation. On Wednesday afternoon, Dr. Richard Knight provided a heartfelt summary of the three days' events that emphasized the import of considering traditional conservation issues from a broad perspective, rather than a narrow focus. According to Knight, we need to concentrate less

on endangered species, off-highway vehicles, and ranching, and more on invasive species, unmanaged recreation, and private lands. He also reminded those assembled that their role as scientists and conservationists has changed in recent times; that in the past, they were often the decisionmakers. Today, they are the catalysts, because conservation must operate, and its value be felt, at all levels of the populace.

Community-based conservation, an important theme of the 7th Biennial Scientific Conference, *Beyond the Arch*, was also a recurring topic at this conference, reminding attendees that, in the words of Dr. Knight, in order to manage effectively in today's world, "we will have to manage differently." Broadening the scope of people involved in conservation will require clear explanations of why conservation is important to everyone, and of the science behind it. Thus, another theme that emerged

was the importance of training scientists and managers to express themselves clearly, and to perceive of their audience as consisting of far more than other scientists. Drs. Gary Machlis and Alice Wondrak Biel addressed this issue in a description of The Canon National Parks Science Scholars Program, and the conference itself seemed to have achieved this goal when Dr. Knight declared that overall, it had been “not just science for scientists.”

The conference was interdisciplinary, as is its hallmark, with panels, sessions, posters, and speakers covering topics that ranged from remote sensing to art history. Superintendent Suzanne Lewis moderated a blue-ribbon panel on Tuesday morning that featured former Yellowstone superintendent Bob Barbee and local, high-level leaders from the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service, focusing on the history and current challenges of the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee. There were also sessions on history, mammals, biocomplexity, water resources, fire, human values, native plants, and trophic cascade questions, all with a cross-agency or cross-boundary perspective.

Greater Yellowstone Public Lands was sponsored by the Yellowstone Association; Yellowstone National Park; the Draper Museum of Natural History



More than 30 papers were presented and 20 posters displayed.

(Buffalo Bill Historical Center); Grand Teton National Park; the University of Wyoming–National Park Service Research Center, Research Office, and Ruckelshaus Institute (University of Wyoming); the Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit; and the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee, consisting of representatives from the National Park Service (Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (National Elk Refuge, Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge), and the U.S. Forest Service (Beaverhead-Deerlodge, Bridger-Teton,

Caribou-Targhee, Custer, Gallatin, and Shoshone National Forests). It was planned and organized by the Resource Information Office of the Yellowstone Center for Resources, in conjunction with other YCR staff and a program committee of independent scholars and non-Yellowstone federal agency personnel. The proceedings should be available sometime next year.

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Opening night in the Map Room, with emergency lights during the power outage.



U.S. Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth gave the opening keynote.